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Closing sale
 Double T shutting its doors for last time
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NHS South?
 Separate health system proposed
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Campaign trail
 Nash vying for NDP leadership
 Page 9

Off route
 Ridership numbers low for regional transit
 Page 14

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INPORTNEWS

SERVING PORT COLBORNE • WAINFLEET • SHERKSTON • LOWBANKS • ISSUE NO. 4 VOLUME 16

For news updated daily see www.inportnews.ca

■ MUNICIPAL FINANCE

Dead man's water bill reduced

MARYANNE FIRTH
 InPort News Staff

PORT COLBORNE — Port Colborne will excuse a significant portion of Allister MacPherson's water bill.

MacPherson died suddenly on Sept. 28 and the bathroom tap in his Delhi St. home ran for three weeks before family members discovered his body.

The steady flow resulted in an inflated water bill received by the family in December totalling \$586.44 — including \$372.14 for usage and \$14.30 for a late payment charge.

MacPherson's daughter, Cara Zandvliet, approached the city in hopes of receiving some relief from the bloated bill.

see **WATER BILL** | page 2

■ SHIPPING: System open for record number of days, tonnage volumes up 2.5%

Seaway reps buoyed by higher figures

DAVE JOHNSON
 InPort News Staff



EDDIE CHAU Staff Photo

The Algoma Progress is docked along the Welland Canal just south of Bridge 21. It's one of a few ships docked during the winter months.

PORT COLBORNE — The tug-barge combination *John Spence-Niagara Spirit* was the last vessel to clear the Welland Canal before the St. Lawrence Seaway system wrapped up its 53rd navigation season, its longest yet.

The seaway was opened to vessel traffic on March 22, 2011, and was open for 284 days, exceeding by one day the previous record set in 2006.

The last vessel to pass through the locks on the St. Lawrence River was the westbound vessel *Algoma Spirit*, helping the seaway's positive momentum remain intact in 2011, according to a news release from St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corp.

Seaway tonnage volumes rose by 2.5% to reach an estimated 37.5 million tonnes, with trade patterns exhibiting a number of changes, such as iron ore and coal becoming export commodities because of strong overseas demand.

see **SHIPPING** | page 2

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■ SHIPPING

Increase of 930,000 tonnes in 2011

FROM PAGE 1

"Grain volumes decreased overall by some 6.4% due to a decrease in the amount of U.S. grain moving via the seaway. Strong increases in the volume of bulk liquids, salt and scrap metal contributed to an overall cargo increase of 930,000 tonnes for the system's 2011 season," the release said.

Terence Bowles, corporation president and CEO, said the year brought about significant progress on a number of fronts.

"We recognize that while some of our core markets remain under pressure, work is progressing in terms of diversifying our market base, containing our costs, and increasing the system's productivity. Over the last four years, our market development efforts have generated \$12.5 million in new business revenue," said Bowles.

"In addition to advances in cargo volumes, we achieved a good deal of progress in 2011 on a number of other fronts" said Bowles.

In October, a three-year labour agreement was ratified with unions that work along the seaway system.

The agreement extends until 2014. Bowles said it controls costs and ensures customers can continue to experience reliable service.

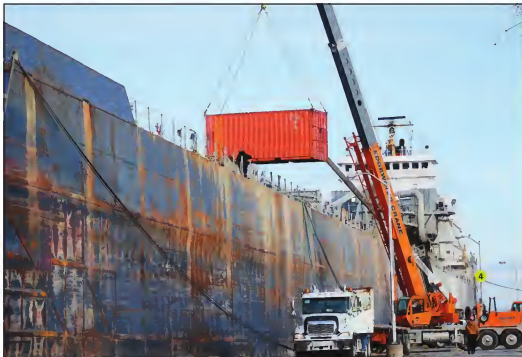
Collister Johnson Jr., administrator of the U.S. Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corp., said the resilience of the North American economy is reflected in the fact that 2011 marked the second consecutive year of increases in seaway traffic and tonnage.

A recently published economic impact study, commissioned by Marine Delivers, showed the significant role the Great Lakes-seaway system plays in supporting the Canadian and U.S. economies.

The report said some 227,000 jobs and \$34 billion in economic activity are supported by the movement of goods within the waterway.

Since its inception in 1959, more than 2.5 billion tonnes valued in excess of \$375 billion has been transported via the seaway.

For more information on the seaway, including access to the full text of the economic impact study, visit www.greatlakes-seaway.com.



A crew from Edgewater Crane hoists a container onto the deck of Algoma Central Corp.'s Peter R. Cresswell. The ship is tied up in Port Colborne for the winter.

DAVE JOHNSON Staff Photo

■ WATER BILL

'If there isn't a precedent, this may set it and open the floodgates'

FROM PAGE 1

After speaking with corporate services staff, Zandvliet was informed the costs must not be recouped as charges sent only out from the city, but also from the region.

City staff were simply following policy as set out by council. Mayor Vance Badaway said last week as he defended their actions.

"There presently exists no mechanism for staff to do otherwise."

Badaway has since spoken with stakeholders and in the future when such an issue arises, the customer is made aware of different options available to them. Such issues will also be brought to the immediate attention of the mayor and council, he said.

Councillors were then pre-

sented with five options to consider in regards to the MacPherson bill.

Ward 3 Coun. Ben Kenny said she struggled with how to deal with the situation, because it is MacPherson's estate, not the deceased, that is ultimately responsible for any outstanding bills.

She recommended the estate be billed the average use for the same time period, from Sept. 14 to Dec. 12, at a cost of \$162.85.

The average use resulted from the household's consumption over the past three years.

"The city would then in turn write off the remainder of the bill, \$409.29, for 188 cubic metres of water," she said.

Kenny had spoken to Port Colborne regional Coun. David Barrick, who agreed he would



Ben

approach the region about having the remaining portion removed or deferred.

"We've all wrestled with this," said Ward 4

Coun. Ron Bodner, not confident that council should excuse the bill.

"It's an unfortunate passing, but is there a precedent for this?" he asked.

"We have people come to us a number of times each year with heart-wrenching stories"

Some have fallen on hard times and cannot afford to pay their bills, he said, and others were on vacation when their



Elliott

outdoor tap was turned on and left to run.

"Just in principle I don't think it's right," Bodner said, adding he believes the estate

should be held responsible for the entire bill.

Council, he said, must consider what is fair to the city's taxpayers who would be picking up the tab if the bill is forgiven.

Bodner spoke with 28 water bill-paying residents and 27 strongly felt the estate should pay the full amount. The other individual was comfortable with whatever decision council made, he said.



Bodner

If people feel the estate shouldn't have to pay, they can make a contribution to the family to assist, Bodner said.

Ward 1 Coun. Dave Elliott said he feels sorry for the family, but agreed with Bodner that it's a matter of doing what's fair for the city's taxpayers — many who are already struggling to pay bills with smaller paycheques and pensions.

"It's not being paid out of pocket," Elliott said of MacPherson's bill. "It's not undo hardship on the family." "If there isn't a precedent,

this may set it and open the floodgates," he added.

When someone dies, it's not uncommon for the city to be contacted by the estate to settle up any outstanding bills, said Peter Senese, director of community and corporate services.

"This is the first time he could recall, however, of an estate requesting relief."

Ward 4 Coun. Barb Butters agreed with Kenny that the estate should be responsible for the average cost. "The excess was a direct result of this horrendous situation for that family," she said.

"They should pay what would have been the normal. This whole situation is outside of the normal."

Kenny's recommendation passed with only Bodner and Elliott opposed.

■ **END OF AN ERA:** Owner focusing on family instead of sales

Door closing at Double T Fashion

EDDIE CHAU
InPort News Staff

PORT COLBORNE — One of Port Colborne's longest serving stores is closing its doors at the end of the month.

Double T Fashion Shoppe, a mainstay along Main St. West in the old Humberstone area, will be shutting its door for a final time at the end of January.

I'm thankful for my loyal customers."

Sara Dekker, owner of Double T Fashion Shoppe

The store is liquidating its stock with an up to 80% discount while a For Lease sign adorns its front window.

Owner Sara Dekker said the business closure is not a result of a faltering economy, rather it's a personal decision.

"Family comes first for me," said Dekker. "I'm expecting a second child and I want to

spend more time with my family. This was a purely personal reason."

Dekker has worked at Double T Fashion Shoppe for the past 10 years, four as owner.

She said the decision was made last year to close the store and had hoped the store's legacy would have continued with a new owner.

No new store owner came forward so the decision to close was heartbreaking.

"Besides Rossmans, we're one of the longest-standing stores in Port Colborne," she said. "I'm thankful for my loyal customers."

Dekker doesn't consider the store's closing as an ending in her life.

"One chapter ends and another begins."

EDDIE CHAU Staff Photo
A For Lease sign hangs in the front window of Double T Fashion Shoppe on Port Colborne's Main St. The store will be closing its doors at the end of the month.



■ **BUSINESS:** Shutdown should last 10 days



MARYANNE FIRTH Staff Photo
The Beer Store at 420 Catharine St. in Port Colborne is temporarily closing its doors beginning today for removal in the building.

Mould forces Beer Store closure

MARYANNE FIRTH
InPort News Staff

PORT COLBORNE — Beginning this last Monday, Port Colborne residents were forced to go to a different store to buy beer.

The Beer Store at 420 Catharine St. was until Feb. 1 or Feb. 2 while mould is removed from the building.

How quickly the store reopens is dependent on how quickly the work can be done.

"This time of year, business is a bit slower," said Jeff Wilcox, corporate health and safety manager for The Beer Store.

"We select stores in Ontario in need of upgrades, repairs and mould abatement," he said, and those stores are temporarily closed as the necessary work is completed.

Wilcox said the Port Colborne store will be closed for mould removal, with other "small residual" tasks also performed during the closure, though he could not specify what this other work could entail.

It's easier to close entirely instead of acting as if it's business as usual."

Jeff Wilcox, corporate health and safety manager for The Beer Store

The mould, which was identified during regularly conducted health and safety inspections, will be removed by an abatement company approved by the Ministry of Labour.

"It's easier to close entirely instead of acting as if it's business as usual," Wilcox said, adding the work should be completed quicker with the store shut down.

The Beer Store, he said, is "sensitive to the needs of the customer" and "greatly appreciates individuals understanding this momentary inconvenience."

"It's a necessary cost of doing business," Wilcox said of the closure, as it's important to remedy the issue.

Every effort will be made to keep the closure down to 10 days — 14 days at the longest, he added.

Outside of Port Colborne, the nearest beer stores can be found in Welland at 390 Lincoln St. E. and 23 Thoid Rd. E., and in Wainfleet, within the Avondale at 54986 Forks Rd.

INPORT NEWS

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ourview

Riding the waterway

During a recent council meeting, a company called BoarderPass Niagara presented what we think is a great idea.

The company wants to install a cable system wakeboarding facility at Sugarloaf Marina.

The cable system is similar to that used on a ski lift, only instead of pulling passengers up an incline, it's pulling them along the water.

Installing a cable system would provide youth and local wakeboard-enthusiasts with a more cost-effective way to ride the waterway, Gary Makins, manager of community services, told council.

Wakeboarding traditionally requires a boat to pull the boarder around, making it an expensive hobby to take on.

Both installation and operation would be funded 100% by BoarderPass Niagara with no cost to the city. Port Colborne would, however, receive a portion of the revenue for use of the marina.

Making more use out of the marina and gaining more revenue from it makes perfect sense to us.

Not only will it generate revenue, but the proposal can help draw new people into the city. Those that don't have a boat can try the sport out at a fraction of the cost.

It could also give local youth something to do in the summer months.

Council heard there's potential to highlight the system in various ways as well, including hosting a competition at the marina during Canal Days Marine Heritage Festival.

No formal proposal is yet in place for the system, but we'd encourage the company to make it as formal as soon as it can.

New home

We're glad to see council select Lock 8 Park as the future home for the city's skateboard and BMX park.

The skate park will be about 1,000 square metres in size and is being designed to include a nautical theme to help it more easily blend into the canal-side park.

The park's existing amenities, including parking and washrooms, were deemed adequate and within a reasonable distance to serve the needs of park's users, which means nothing new has to be built along those lines.

Now that council has approved the location, staff will meet with representatives of St. Lawrence Management Corp. to seek permission to build at Lock 8.

We're hopeful the agency will approve the plan and let the city start building the facility as soon as the nice weather arrives.

I'VE BEEN THINKING

FR DAVID GRAHAM SCOTT
St Ignatius of Antioch Orthodox Church

Kids bullying other kids in schools is wrong. It is also widespread. A mainstream survey by the American Association of University Women showed that 83% of all girls and 79% of all boys report experiencing physical intimidation or sexual harassment at school.

These statistics tally with the Canadian homosexual survey reporting that 75% of LGBQT students felt unsafe in at least one place in their school. But 83 percent of girls and 79% of boys in America experienced some form of bullying, the 75% of LGBQT students in Canada are probably not being especially singled out because of their so-called sexual orientation.

An American homosexual survey reported that students are more often bullied, called names, or harassed because of "the way they look or their body size" than because of their sexual orientation. Dr Herbert Hendlin in his *Suicide in America* reportedly "found no evidence that social discrimination was a major factor behind the suicide attempts of the homosexual students he studied." And a study by a pro-homosexual researcher found that "gay and lesbian teenagers are only slightly more likely than heterosexual kids to attempt suicide."

readers' views

Welland River's new floodplain

It's a real shame no one from local media felt a meeting held at the Firehall in Watford was worth covering. One would think that any meeting that attracted in excess of 130+ residents from Watford, Pelham and Welland just might be newsworthy?

Anyone would think that when the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority decided to increase the floodplain area along the entire Welland River from 5% to 95%, without any public consultation, maybe one intrepid reporter may have thought it worth asking a question or two?

Some time ago the provincial government announced they would be asking the authorities and municipalities involved (in this case the NPCA) to review

And yet the Ontario Government's anti-bullying Bill 13 would focus on gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered/queer students rather than on the obvious majority of students who also experience bullying. This focus suggests that the anti-bullying legislation as proposed will really be giving McGuinty's 2010 gay equity proposal the force of law.

McGuinty has long been noted as a man who loves to ban something. Banning bullying seems more reasonable than banning certain breeds of dogs. But to legislate children into embracing a sexual revolution of individualism's permissiveness at the same time as banning bullying is unduly coercive.

Indeed the current bill before the Legislature would be tantamount to making homosexuality the state religion. If Christian denominations are not allowed to proselytize in the public schools, why should homosexual advocates be allowed to do so?

Daniel Villarreal wrote in *Queerly*, "We want educators to teach future generations of children to accept queer sexuality. In fact our very future depends on it." He also wrote, "Why would we push anti-bullying programs... unless we wanted to deliberately educate children to accept queer sexuality as normal?... Recruiting children? You bet we are."

Education is neither propaganda nor recruiting. But McGuinty's Bill 13 would legislate that education includes

homosexual propaganda. The bill's requirement that all schools permit Gay-Straight Alliances would guarantee that.

The gay equity proposal also expects teachers to promote the concept of "gender fluidity", which is the theory that a child's gender is not connected to his or her anatomy. I have no trouble with the idea that each gender has a spectrum of masculinity or femininity, but let's let boys be boys and girls be girls. Adolescence is confusing enough without promoting "gender fluidity".

To top off the McGuinty government's obsession with homosexuality, Glen Murray, the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, says that by 2013 prospective teachers in Ontario will be required to undergo two years of focused training in "sexual orientation" and "gender diversity".

I cannot help but wonder why this sexual revolution must be forced down everyone's throat. Coercion, which is a form of bullying, is surely a sign that something dubious and questionable is being pushed.

Mirosław Volf in his *Public Faith* (2011) argues that coercive methods often prevail when faith has been reduced to the source of a triumphant tribalism.

Has Dalton McGuinty's Government nothing better to do for education than to reduce it to promoting the triumphant tribalisms of homosexual and gender-diversity militants?

the designated floodplain along the Welland River and offer suggestions and conclusions to adopt new parameters.

To date, the provincial government has not asked for this review to be started but the NPCA decided not only to do it anyway, but have already drawn up a new floodplain area within which no property owner will be given a building permit for any building or improvement, and no farmer will be able to make changes to his land or farming activities to improve his business.

There are two 'dirty little secrets' that just don't appear in the NPCA's plan. Because of NPCA past and ongoing incompetence, the two 'siphons' one under the Welland Canal and one under Highway 140, designed and built specifically to allow Welland River floodwater easy access to Niagara River are choked with sediment and can no longer cope with floodwater. NPCA don't want to pay, albeit with tax dollars, to

have these cleaned properly.

The now, way over budget hydro tunnel, on Niagara River, once completed, will increase the Ontario Power Generation Board's ability to force water against the Welland River's natural flow and so reduce the river's ability to release floodwater even more than at present. The "cheap" solution is to prevent any property owner along the Welland River from being able to make any improvements to his property in order to maintain it as no more than a huge sponge to soak up as much floodwater as possible up to and including the flooding of properties and good farmland whenever necessary.

Anyone with property along the Welland River: this is your home, probably your biggest single investment. Can you imagine what this NPCA scheme will do to your property's value?

Andrew Watts
Watford

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■ **SHOWBOAT FESTIVAL:** Box office now selling tickets for fellow company

Seeing Operatic Society performances just got easier

LINDSAY COSTELLO
For InPort News

It's like a well-oiled machine.
Stage manager Anne Converset

PORT COLBORNE — Classic Broadway hits will come to life this winter when the Port Colborne Operatic Society debuts its annual musical.

Beginning with the audition process in September, the group has been hard at work throughout the season to bring the tale of little orphan Annie to the stage.

With their February debut fast approaching, the group hopes to make the show more accessible with the introduction of a new ticketing procedure.

"We're excited about it," said the Port Colborne Operatic Society's Jan Marshall of the first time tickets are being made available through the Showboat Festival Theatre Box Office.

She said this method is

more convenient because theatergoers can use debit, cash or credit as opposed to the cash only sales in past years.

The cast and crew, consisting of about 80 children and adults, have been rehearsing twice a week to perfect their songs and dance numbers in anticipation of opening night and will give seven performances throughout the show's run.

The group is made up of talent of all ages from across the region and with a large-scale production like Annie, many individuals balance their time between backstage and onstage roles.

Stage manager Anne

Converset said the collaborative effort is made easier with a dedicated team.

"It's like a well-oiled machine," she said.

She said that following many months of preparations, she is excited to see the group's work play out in front of a crowd.

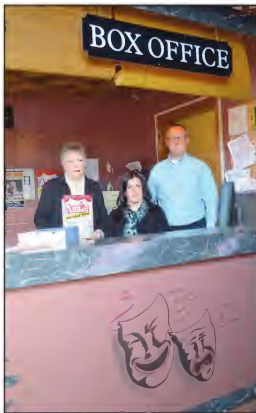
"We can't wait to put it on for our audience," she said.

The Port Colborne

Operatic Society's production of Annie will make its debut on Feb. 18 at the Lakeshore Catholic High School auditorium and will return to the stage on Feb. 19, 25 and 26, and March 2, 3 and 4 with both matinee and evening performances.

Tickets are \$20 each and are available through the Showboat Festival Theatre Box Office at 296 Fielden Ave. Stop by between 9 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. from Monday to Friday to pick up a ticket or order by phone by calling 905-834-0833 or 1-888-870-8181.

LINDSAY COSTELLO InPort News Photo
Port Colborne Operatic Society's Jan Marshall, Roselawn Box Office supervisor Terry Rosnuk and Showboat Festival Theatre treasurer Grant Thornton announce Port Colborne Operatic Society's new ticketing procedure for its production of Annie. Tickets can be purchased for \$20 through the Showboat Festival Box Office at the Roselawn, 296 Fielden Ave., using debit, credit cards or cash.



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BEFORE

■ ARTS PLACE GALLERY: Port High students show works of art

Gallery owner developing a relationship with students

LINDSAY COSTELLO
For InPort News

PORT COLBORNE — Art imitates life as Port Colborne High School students transform every day materials and objects into works of art as part of Arts Place Gallery's latest exhibit.

Gallery owner Joyce Honsberger reached out to the students and proposed the idea of a student-run exhibit, which prompted art teacher Dawn Mayne to challenge her senior class to develop a concept and create their own pieces to display.

Art in the Everyday is the first student-run exhibit, a concept Honsberger said she would like to explore again in the future.

"We've been developing a relationship," said Mayne of the school's involvement with gallery happenings.

Blue Bears visit the gallery for inspiration and have gallery members as guest speakers who teach workshops in the classroom.

While the gallery mem-

"It's a very authentic experience. There's a lot more to putting together a show than just producing your actual piece."

Dawn Mayne, Port Colborne High School art teacher

bers donated the space, the details of the exhibit were up to the students as they simulated an artist's duties.

"It's a very authentic experience," said Mayne. "There's a lot more to putting together a show than just producing your actual piece."

She said it was a challenge to create the pieces in a non-traditional way and that students needed to experiment and adapt through trial and error using a variety of mediums.

Featuring about 20 pieces, the exhibit is out of the ordinary as it consists mainly of art made from recyclable materials and follows a loose theme.

Mayne said the students spent about two months on the creations and exhibit details, a project that

served as a practical final exam.

Art in the Everyday began Jan. 21 and will run until Feb. 26 at Arts Place Gallery at 714 King St. in Port Colborne. A reception will be held Jan. 28 between 3 and 5 p.m.

Arts Place is open Friday through Sunday from noon to 4:30 p.m. during the winter.

LINDSAY COSTELLO
InPort News Photo

Port Colborne High School senior art students Sarah Bailey and Shelby Burse display pieces from Arts Place Gallery's student-produced exhibit, Art in the Everyday. Ordinary objects have been transformed for the exhibit that runs until Feb. 26 and features repurposed, recyclable and wearable art created by Blue Bears.



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R. Ph. & Sc. Phn. (owner)

Ask Our Pharmacists



DONNIE EDWARDS
R. Ph. & Sc. Phn.

Dry Skin

At this time of year patients are starting to complain about dry skin. Dry skin management often involves some trial and error of different products, but there are some general rules everyone can follow to help manage symptoms.

Dry skin occurs when oils in the skin are lost and water that is normally in the skin is able to escape. When bathing or showering it is important to use lukewarm water as opposed to hot water. Hot water can cause more oil to be lost from the skin and cause itching and dryness. Soap should be used only for groin, underarms, and feet. Other moisturizing body washes can be used for the rest of the body. After showering or bathing apply a moisturizer to help retain some of the moisture from the shower.

There are many different types of moisturizers. Depending on the ingredients they have separate functions. Some ingredients can hydrate and soften the skin. Others provide a barrier to prevent water loss, and others help to draw water to the top layer of the skin. Depending on what combination of ingredients are used there are four classes of moisturizers. There are ointments, oils, creams, and lotions.

Examples of ointment moisturizers include Aquaphor, and Vaseline. These moisturizers can be greasy and only a small amount is needed. They would be useful for someone with very dry hands. They can be applied at night under cotton gloves.

An example of an oil moisturizer would be baby oil. Again, only a small amount is needed. It is not a good idea to add these to the bath because they can make the tub very slippery. As well they can cause yeast infections when added to bath water.

An example of a cream moisturizer would be Cetaphil moisturizing cream. Cream moisturizers are generally less greasy, and very gentle for sensitive skin. Cetaphil specializes in products that won't cause acne and are safe for people with allergies.

Lotions are the least greasy; however, they sometimes contain alcohol and can be drying. An example would be Nivea body lotion. Read the label on the back of the lotion. You may want to avoid those that contain alcohol.

In general, most moisturizers need to be applied several times throughout the day.

Our cold dry climate leads to many complaints about dry skin. Luckily, there are many products on the market that can help even the worst sufferers. If you are not sure about what is right for you, you may need to ask for some professional advice.

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■ BUSINESS: Corner Cafe and Gas Bar turns 8



Supplied photo

The Corner Cafe and Gas Bar, at the corner of Hwy. 3 and Burnaby Rd. in Wainfleet, celebrated its eighth anniversary recently and that it became an Esso Station as well, with new gas pumps and a Country Style Outlet. From left are Herb Decker, regional business manager for Country Style, owners Raj and Harry Sidhu and Mayor April Jeffs.



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■ **EDUCATION:** Port Colborne High School students certified in skilled trade

EDDIE CHAU Staff Photo

Port Colborne High School student Carmine Esposito creates some sparks while welding two pieces of metal together. Esposito is one of 10 students from the school who became a certified welder.

Welding's the ticket for teens

EDDIE CHAU
InPort News Staff

PORT COLBORNE — When the helmet is flipped on and the flame starts to flare it's all business for Carmine Esposito.

The Port Colborne High School student is a master at welding. He can join two pieces of metal together with relative ease.

"Are you ready?" said Esposito to technology teacher Vic Barker, who stands back, watching proudly as his student combines two metal bars together — thanks to the education Esposito received as part of Port High's special high skills major welding program.

With his acquired skills, Esposito and nine other Port High students can now be employed in skilled trades having received certification tickets in welding. Barker said there's a variety of different certification processes for welding — flat, vertical and overhead welding positions as examples — that the students were tested on.

The welding ticket is one of

several certifications required — which include first aid, CPR and hazardous materials and others — as part of the special high skills major program.

“Many of the students have been hired right out of high school. That doesn't happen all that often.”

Vic Barker,
Esposito technology teacher

"We trained here for it then took the kids to Beamsville where they met a welding inspector," Barker said. "Before we went we ran through the entire certification process here. The kids knew their stuff. Ten guys now have (certification) tickets."

Port High is known for its successful welding program. Every year students from the school participate in the District School Board

of Niagara Regional Welding Challenge in March.

Last year student Daniel Dressel won gold in welding at the Canadian Skills Competition in Quebec City.

With certification, Barker said, students can work anywhere with a welding position. Many local companies have good working relationships with the school via co-op placements and apprenticeships.

"Many of the students have been hired right out of high school. That doesn't happen all that often," Barker said.

"(Certification training) also gives students the advantage for continued education at college. There are many opportunities out there."

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■ **POLITICS:** Parkdale-High Park MP stops at Welland roadhouse

Nash drumming up support for NDP leadership bid

MARYANNE FIRTH
InPort News Staff

WELLAND — Peggy Nash knows she can't fill Jack Layton's shoes.

But she'd be proud to follow in his footsteps.

The federal NDP leadership candidate and MP for Parkdale-High Park in Toronto hopes the people of Canada can trust in her just as they trusted in Layton — although she knows that may take time.

Nash plans to continue to build her relationship with Canadians through a cross-country campaign tour, which included a stop in Welland last week.

The tour is an opportunity for Nash to introduce herself to various communities and share her vision for the future, both for the New Democratic Party and for Canada, she said while sitting at a table at Bada Bing Roadhouse waiting for the crowd to roll in.

As people walked through the door, she thanked them for braving the inclement winter weather to attend. About two dozen supporters ended up making the trek to the Maple Ave. bar and restaurant.

Nash was joined by Welland NDP MP Malcolm Allan. Former longtime Welland NDP MPP Peter Kormos, who has openly endorsed Nash for the leadership role, was unable to attend because of a prior commitment in Toronto but provided a statement offering his support.

Nash called it crucial to show the millions of voters who cast their ballots for NDP in the last election "why they should stay with us, continue to trust us and that we're willing to hear them."

But also key is inspiring

people who have not been voting to get to the polls, she said, adding she believes the right leader will have the ability to do just that.

"We need someone who is a fighter for social democratic values, a builder to bring everyone together, and someone who can go toe-to-toe with Stephen Harper," Nash told the crowd as she took the floor.

With experience in her pocket as a labour official at the Canadian Auto Workers union and as a parliamentarian, holding the role of finance critic for the Official Opposition, Nash is confident she can be that leader.

"No one can fill Jack Layton's shoes," she told the room.

"But we all want to follow in Jack Layton's footsteps and build on his inspiring and incredible success all of you helped build."

For the first time in the party's history, Nash said, the



Peggy Nash

NDP have the potential to form the government.

"We've done so much. This is a golden opportunity to build our party, our social democratic movement," she said.

"Our challenge today is to build on those 58 seats we have in Quebec and the other dozen across Canada, and to help that orange wave spread further west across our country and in Ontario."

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■ **HEALTH CARE:** Southern-tier communities need to speak with one voice to ensure equal access to hospital services, Badawey says

Hospital system for south Niagara proposed

ALLAN BENNER
InPort News Staff

PORT COLBORNE — The people of south Niagara should have the same access to hospital services as those living in the region's north end, says Port Colborne Mayor Vance Badawey.

way that's going to happen is by establishing a hospital system specifically for south Niagara communities, he says.

"I think we all recognize the (health) system is too large to be administered," Badawey says. "I believe it's the largest in the province of Ontario with the amount of

sites and the amount of challenges that it has — not to mention the geography.”

Badawey hopes to team up with representatives of other south Niagara communities to "speak with one voice" and meet with provincially-appointed Niagara Health System supervisor Kevin Smith, to ask him to

essentially bring local decision-making back to south Niagara hospitals.

***We are an unsatisfied customer of the Niagara Health System, and therefore if our current provider cannot accomplish what our expectations are, then in fact we'll simply role up our sleeves and do it on our**

own," he says.

Welland Ward 2 Coun. Frank Camplon, chair of the city's health-care committee, says Badawey's initiative "makes a lot of sense."

"I think Port Colborne, Welland and Wainfleet are all interested in the best quality health care for south Niagara. We all have

common ground as far as that goes," he says. "The real ultimate goal is that we all have access to top-quality health care."

The south Niagara communities would benefit from synergies by working together, he adds.

see **HEALTH CARE** | page 12[illegible]

■ HEALTH CARE

NHS for the south 'is the only solution'

FROM PAGE 11

"We'll have the power of more people, more communities, more municipal leaders, etc., to help us bring our message to the province and to Kevin Smith."

Welland MPP Cindy Forster says the people of south Niagara feel they have not been listened to about their health-care needs.

"They weren't listened to by the NHS, they weren't listened to by the (Local Health Integration Network) and they weren't listened to by the (Premier Dalton) McGuinty government," Forster says.

"I kinda like (Badawey's)



Badawey

ideas of inviting other people to sit on his health-care committee," she says. "It's time for them to come

together. It's timely because Kevin Smith is here, and he will hear it from one voice in south Niagara."

The South Niagara Health Care Corp. board of directors is looking for representatives from Wainfleet and Welland



Campion

municipal councils to join, Badawey says, adding he hopes to include representatives from Pelham and Fort Erie on the board

as well.

Port Colborne established the corporation in 2006 after the release of the NHS hospital improvement plan. It was an effort to preserve health-care services in the community.



Forster

could be implemented across south Niagara to ensure equitable access to health care while enhancing services.

The desire to establish a south Niagara health system is not new.

In early November, shortly



Schoffield

after a report on the poor NHS reputation was released by McMaster University researcher Terry Flynn, local health-

care advocate Pat Schoffield publicly called for "a divorce" from north Niagara hospitals. "I think it's important that there be good health care for every one in Niagara — not just north Niagara, but south Niagara as well."

They weren't listened to by the NHS, they weren't listened to by the (Local Health Integration Network) and they weren't listened to by the (Premier Dalton) McGuinty government."

Welland MPP Cindy Forster

She's confident a south Niagara health system "is the only solution to the problem."

■ FELINE INITIATIVE: \$500 fundraising target must be met



Supplied photo

Arnold McBey plans to shave his head if by Feb. 28 Niagara can raise \$500 for the Port Colborne Feline Initiative.

Instructor to shave head for cat care

VICTORIA GRAY
InPort News Staff

PORT COLBORNE — Abandoned cats and their offspring can't change what they are, but people can change how they treat and deal with them, says Arnold McBey, a cat owner and supporter of the Port Colborne Feline Initiative.

An instructor and visual arts department facilities tech-

nician at Brock University, McBey plans to shave his head if donors come up with \$500 for the feline initiative by Feb. 28.

Now, in the second week of his campaign, funds have reached more than \$300.

"This isn't what the group would classify as a big-ticket fundraiser. It's a scaled-back, little fundraiser to keep funds rolling in and community awareness up as well," he said.

PCFI runs a trap, neuter and release (TNR) program and has spay and neuter clinics for low-income earners in Port Colborne.

"By managing populations (with TNR) the colony will dwindle down to nothing," he said, adding it's a preferred alternative to euthanizing.

For more information or to donate visit www.canada-helps.org/CharityProfilePage.aspx?CharityID=103676.

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■ WAINFLEET VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS



APRIL JEFFS Supplied photo
Wainfleet volunteer firefighter Katie Marino is one of 26 volunteer firefighters to pose for a fundraising calendar.

Calendars are a hot commodity

InPort News Staff

WAINFLEET — The 2012 calendars featuring images of Wainfleet's volunteer firefighters are a hot commodity.

Many of the 300 copies the firefighters printed have been sold.

"Not very many people have many calendars left," said volunteer firefighter Katie Marino, who's picture graces the month of January.

"They were amazing pictures. Very classy," Marino said, adding Mayor April Jeffs, a professional photographer, snapped the images for the calendar. "I've gotten a lot of compliments."

Money raised through the sale of the calendars will be used to help local families, she added.

In addition to sports activities for children including soccer, hockey, figure skat-

ing and basketball, she said they also use funds to assist people in need, including putting together Christmas baskets for families that are struggling.

Calendars are still available at several businesses throughout Wainfleet and Port Colborne, including Dominic's Diner, 284 Diner, Lou's Tire, Boggios Pharmacy and Sidey's Flowers.

They cost \$20 each.



TOWNSHIP OF WAINFLEET NOTICE

PUBLIC MEETING – 2012 BUDGET

TAKE NOTICE that the Township of Wainfleet will be holding a public meeting, in accordance with Bylaw 046-2007, to obtain input from members of the public regarding the 2012 Budget.

The meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, January 31, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers, 31940 Highway 3.**

Any person who attends has the opportunity to make a presentation with respect to the 2012 Budget. For recordkeeping purposes, a copy of your presentation is to be submitted to the Clerk at the meeting. In order for Council to hear from as many residents as possible, presentations are limited to 10 minutes per presenter.

If you are unable to attend the public meeting, you can provide written comments to the Clerk at 31940 Highway 3, Wainfleet ON L0S 1V0 or via e-mail at tlamb@wainfleet.ca

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■ **BUSES:** Ridership below expectations

17,667: Niagara Regional Transit's not-so-magic number

JEFF BOLICHOWSKI
QMI Agency

ST. CATHARINES — Niagara Region Transit's ridership is

climbing, but it still fell short of expectations in the buses' first 3½ months on the road.

The system pulled in a preliminary count of 17,667 riders from

Sept. 16 through December, the Region's transportation strategy steering committee heard Tuesday.

That's below where they want

to be, but associate transportation director Kumar Ranjan stayed mum on what the expectations were, saying that will come to council's public works committee in a couple weeks.

But ridership is improving. Since its September launch, every route has seen more users from one month to the next.

"We are looking on an upward trajectory right now," Ranjan said.

The ridership figure came to the steering committee, which includes representatives from local town and city councils, without any more information on how much cash the system took in. Transportation director Joe Cousins said that's tough math, because of how the region and local bus systems divvy up the fare money when riders transfer between them.

Ranjan told the committee the fact the pilot project is not meeting expectations yet is expected. He said a transit system's first year is always slow as people get used to having it around.

"Here, we're not finding anything unexpected at this point in time," he said.

The most travelled route thus far is the line between Welland and St. Catharines, which saw 7,330 riders as of December.

On the low end, 3,805 riders took the bus between Welland and Niagara Falls. The route from the Falls to St. Catharines carried 6,532 riders.

Though the system was originally intended to connect local

transit systems, the region found as many — if not more — riders are taking it direct from stop to stop without transfers. For such trips, the region keeps the full fare.



Zimmerman

That was a surprise, said Ranjan.

"Initially, we were thinking not so many people would be taking it hub to hub."

Steering committee chair Coun. Debbie Zimmerman said ridership is getting better, but acknowledged it's not where it could be.

"It's positive going forward," she said of the increasing ridership. "It's not the numbers we need, but it's still the early stages."

She attributed the shortfall to the region having to "integrate a number of individuals" into its bus system. At the moment, the region buys its bus service from municipal transit providers in St. Catharines, Welland and Niagara Falls.

"We need to figure out what the impediments are, the impediments to our success," Zimmerman said. She singled out the \$5 fare, which is set to jump to \$6 after the first six months.

She said eventually, the region will need to make transit a one-stop shop.

"We need, eventually, a single system and that should be the ultimate goal," she said.

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■ FUNDRAISER: Shopper's Drug Mart collects for Port Cares



ALLAN BENNER Staff Photo

Port Colborne's Shopper's Drug Mart store on Clarence St. collected \$1,410 in donations during its Tree of Life fundraising campaign, to assist Port Cares offering the women's health programs. From left, Shopper's Drug Mart staff Judy Wilson, Tina Warrington, Robin Haworth, and pharmacist Susan Marshall present a cheque to Caitlin Battista and Pam Swick Janjac from Port Cares.

■ **RECREATION:** Seaway corporation must give OK for project build

Councillors still locked on canal-side skatepark

MARYANNE FIRTH
InPort News Staff

PORT COLBORNE — Port Colborne's skateboarders will soon have a new home at Lock 8 Park.

During the last council meeting, the green space was approved as the future home for the city's skateboard and

BMX park.

City-owned properties suitable for construction of the new facility were scored by Port Colborne's skate park group, Niagara Regional Police, city engineering and community service staff, Land Inc. (the company that has undertaken the design and development of the park)

and the public.

Following a public consultation meeting on Dec. 19, Lock 8 was chosen as the preferred site.

The skate park will be about 1,000 square metres in size and is being designed to include a nautical theme to help it more easily blend into the canal-side park,

said Gary Makins, Port Colborne's manager of community services.

Ward 4 Coun. Ron Bodner questioned whether sufficient parking is already in place for the new addition, even though the nearest lot is on the other side of the existing park.

During the public consul-

tation process it was determined no additional parking was needed as many of the skate park's visitors would be coming on bikes and skateboards, Makins said. The park's existing amenities, including parking and washrooms, were deemed adequate and within a reasonable distance to serve

the needs of the skate park's users, he added.

Now that council has approved the location, staff will meet with representatives of St. Lawrence Management Corp. to seek permission to build at Lock 8.

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■ **COMMUNITY:** Talks ongoing since last year

Niagara's three United Ways consider merger

JEFF BOLICHOWSKI
QMI Agency

ST. CATHARINES — Niagara's three United Ways could be getting a little more united.

The United Ways of South Niagara, St. Catharines and District, and Niagara Falls and Greater Fort Erie have

been eyeing amalgamation, they said in a news release Wednesday. Though nothing has been decided, the issue has been talked over since 2011 by a steering committee of board members and executive directors from the three organizations.

It's not anything close to a done deal, cautioned Rob

DePetrus, board chair for United Way of St. Catharines and District, and other options might come up.

But he said he supports the idea, noting it could bring the strengths of each United Way together.

"I think it's a good idea," he said. "I wouldn't be going through the effort and work

on this if I didn't think there was a great benefit to us working more closely together."

The United Way is the probably the most prolific funder of charities in Niagara. The United Way of St. Catharines and District, for example, is a funder for 70 programs carried out by 40 agencies.

United Way of South

Niagara board president Angela Carter said unifying could allow the three United Ways to help more people.

They already put their heads together to run their campaigns and share leadership, communications and campaign materials among one another, she said.

"Certainly, it would help

more people in the community," she said.

"That's ultimately why we are doing what we're doing." Both Carter and DePetrus said the merger idea was floated without any outside circumstances pushing the three United Ways. And Carter said many United Ways across the country are amalgamating,



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DECEMBER 14, 2011**

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CONTEST WINNER: Bogna Przybylak claims stay at bed and breakfast



MARYANNE FIRTH Staff Photo

Bogna Przybylak, grand prize winner of the Niagara's South Coast Adventure Passport contest, collects her winnings from Port Colborne Mayor Vance Badaway during Monday night's city council meeting. As the first-place winner, Przybylak took home a package including one night's accommodation at Lakemore Niagara Bed and Breakfast and gift certificates for The Spa Port Colborne and @27 Restaurant. The contest is held by the city in conjunction with Port Colborne-Wainfleet Chamber of Commerce. It encourages people to visit various cultural, recreational and commercial locations throughout Port Colborne and Wainfleet. Three other participants, Judy Kramer, Dave Shales and Lynn Langman, also took home prizes, though they were absent from the meeting.

SUGARLOAF MARINA: New way to ride the waterway pitched to city councillors

Boat-less wakeboarding may glide into Port Colborne

MARYANNE FIRTH
InPort News Staff

PORT COLBORNE — Riding the waterway in Port Colborne may get a little easier.

After receiving approval at last week's council meeting, city staff will be requesting a formal proposal from BoarderPass Niagara to install a cable system wakeboarding facility at Sugarloaf Marina.

The cable system is similar to that used on a ski hill, only instead of pulling passengers up an incline, it's pulling them along the lake, Gary Makins, manager of community services, told councillors.

As wakeboarding traditionally is a sport that is pulled to the boarder around, it can be quite an expensive hobby to take on, Makins said.

Installing a cable system would provide youth and local

wakeboard-enthusiasts with a more cost-effective way to ride the waterway.

Both installation and operation would be funded 100% by BoarderPass Niagara with no cost to the city.

Port Colborne would, however, receive a portion of the revenue for use of the marina.

It would not only bring new revenue to the city, it would also send the message that the marina is not just for people with boats, said Mayor Vance Badaway.

"This would be something unique to the area," Makins said, adding it has potential to bring tourists to Port Colborne. The only other wakeboarding cable system in southern Ontario is found in Samia, he added.

There's potential to highlight the system in various ways, Makins said, including

hosting a competition at the marina during Capecornia Days Marine Heritage Festival.

With no formal proposal in place yet, the location of the cable system at the marina has yet to be determined. If approved, it would be installed in an unused space so as to not disrupt existing activities, Makins said.

Next year the city will be looking for an operator for the entire Sugarloaf Harbour Complex. Installation of the system would have no effect on the request for proposal for marina operations, he added.

The cable system is a great way for beginners to try their hand at the adventurous water sport, said Ward 1 Coun. Bill Steele.

The self-proclaimed wakeboarder called the sport a lot of fun and said it's an activity that people of all ages can try.

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WHAT IS BELLY FAT?

Belly fat is comprised of mainly visceral, or omentum fat. This fat is different than subcutaneous fat (the fat you can pinch). Experts agree that omentum fat is the least desirable fat on the body because of the way it packs itself around our vital organs. The loss of belly fat, for both men and women, can promote overall health.

HOW MUCH BELLY FAT IS TOO MUCH?

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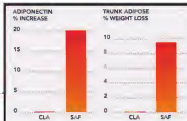
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